



DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

LEADERSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION

The River's Statement of Purpose:

To embrace in community the life-changing person and teaching of Jesus and to manifest together His kingdom deeply in our lives and broadly in our world.

The River's Journey:

The River is a church that is on a dynamic journey. We started 13 years ago in suburban Sunnyvale, CA, a relatively privileged community in Silicon Valley. Our initial goal was to become a church that was deliberately accessible for a postmodern generation of seekers. Our original demographic was predominantly young professionals, single and white.

In recent years, the Holy Spirit has led us to embrace more fully all the dimensions of Jesus' Kingdom. God has impressed upon us His special concern for "the least" as well as the "lost," and His desire for a church that would serve as a bridge between the "haves" and the "have-nots" of our society. As part of that process, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, we moved our Sunday morning celebration service to urban San José, a socio-economically and culturally more diverse neighborhood. While our church still retains some of our original demographic, we have become more multi-ethnic and multi-class in our overall makeup.

Currently, we have approximately 350 people (100 of whom are children) who are active participants in the community; most join us on Sunday mornings. 150 adults are members of a regular small group, and many children participate in these small group communities. We have several local and foreign mission initiatives that reflect our understanding of "integrated mission," where verbal proclamation is integrated with an active demonstration of the Kingdom. We also place a high value on helping people to progress on personal healing journeys to become healthier people in constructive relationships.

Children and Our Journey:

I. Children and Sunday Morning

With an early focus on outreach to professional single adults, more staff energy and vision has traditionally gone towards the adult ministry. As families have begun to represent a higher percentage of the church community, the church has intentionally moved towards becoming one church community where children are considered significant members. Over 70 adults, both parents and non-parents, serve as volunteers in Kids' Community (the name of the ministry with children) on Sunday mornings each month. The church has quarterly All Church Family services where children are included and the teaching and worship are intergenerational. Children help lead worship during special seasons such as Christmas and Easter, and families participate in church-wide service activities. We are growing in two convictions: that it deepens the faith formation of children to be full participants in the life of the church and that adults also become better followers of Jesus through greater connection with children.

II. Ministry Style

Kids' Community's ministry philosophy is spiritual formation-based and places importance on acknowledging the developmental stages of childhood. The main curriculum for children 3-12 years old is Godly Play, a Montessori style method of Bible storytelling and child-directed discovery. More emphasis is placed on each child's own process of internalizing faith and core Christian beliefs than on external practices that have been traditional measures of belief (altar calls, scripture or fact memorization, prizes, etc.). A high value is placed on relationship-building and the power of modeling by adults in the community. The book *Postmodern Children's Ministry* by Ivy Beckwith has been significant in the development of our philosophy of ministry.

III. Families

Our belief is that parents and guardians are the main people of faith influence for children. The church community is an active partner in that work and ministry staff seek to support parents, affirming and equipping them for their unique role. Children are always welcome to join parents in the adult worship service and families are invited to worship and serve together on a regular basis.

IV. The Community Outside Our "Walls"

We desire for our ministry to be a safe and attractive place for children and families new to our community. Kids' Community places a high value on hospitality and support for new families. It is also important that the ministry be a blessing to those in need, so children are given regular opportunities to serve and give. Ministry staff support community programs as needed, i.e. a community-based vacation Bible school.

Some Specifics on Children's Ministry:

With respect to Sunday morning, our ministry averages about 85-90 children on a given week across six communities with the following age distribution:

- Infants - 18 months (Infants)
- 18 months - 2 years (Walkers)
- 3 year olds – Pre-K
- K – 1st grade
- 2nd – 3rd grade
- 4th – 5th grade

The church is a "setup and teardown" church that requires setup of the children's ministry rooms each Sunday. We currently meet at the Student Union of San Jose State University, located in downtown San Jose. There is no regular midweek children's program at this time. Please note that students from 6th to 12th grade become part of our Youth Ministry and are cared for and led by our Student Ministries Director.

Role of Children's Ministry Director:

Responsibilities

1. Implement and oversee the children's ministry programs (Sunday mornings, All Church Family Services and special events, dedications, service opportunities, etc.).
2. Manage staff and volunteers in a way that promotes their personal growth while effectively executing ministry programs.
3. Continue to champion the integration of children (and ministries to children) into the overall life and ministry of The River.
4. Seek out and create opportunities for families to be supported in faith formation.
5. Recruit and train volunteers to serve, according to their gifting, in ministry to children.
6. Maintain the established Sunday ministry structure and use the Godly Play curriculum for at least one full ministry year.
7. Deepen the formation value of faith development in the ministry by working with curricula and methods that foster this approach.
8. Budget ministry expenses and manage expenditures of the budget.
9. Creatively develop practices that mark growth in faith for children.

Qualifications

1. A mature and emotionally healthy Christ-follower who can serve as a role model for parents and children.
2. Ability to be articulate about child development and the spiritual formation of children.
3. Highly developed managerial skills – able to promote the personal growth of staff and volunteers while supervising effective program development and delivery.
4. Proven administrative skills – able to effectively lead a highly complex, multi-faceted ministry involving many volunteers
5. Deep love for and ability to function intuitively with children at any place on their spiritual journey.
6. A proven collaborator and team builder who is highly relational and has a history of developing volunteers and leaders.
7. Experienced teacher and/or trainer, of both adults and children.
8. Conflict resolution/peacemaking skills.
9. Willingness to be trained in Godly Play, if not already certified.
10. Agreement with and active support for the values and mission of The River Church Community.
11. Sensitivity to and experience working in a multicultural and multiracial context.

Direct Reporting and Review

The Children's Ministry Director reports to Brad Wong, Senior Pastor.

Estimated Hours

This position is scoped as a half-time, salaried role. Sunday will be considered a workday.

To Apply

Submit a resume, cover letter, and an optional 1-2 page response to the questions below to Jill Bekaert via email at jill@the-river.org or via regular mail:

Jill Bekaert
The River Church Community
701 North 1st Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Optional Questions:

We encourage you to apply even if your work experience may not immediately seem like an obvious match for the position. To help us identify people who do not have specific children's ministry work experience but might still be a good match, please answer the following questions when submitting your resume:

1. Why are you applying for this position? Why do you feel called to this type of position, and at this time?
2. What have you seen in Children's Ministry that doesn't feel satisfying to you or seems to be missing? Where are your passions in ministry to children?
3. What are some of your deeply held values or beliefs with regard to children's ministry or spiritual formation?